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## BURKHARD ZINK

## A WANDERING SCHOLAR OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

An interesting introduction to the autobiographical accounts of the life of the wandering scholar is to be found in the *Chronik* of Burkhard Zink.<sup>1</sup> Zink's wanderings, which took place between the years 1407 and 1415, antedate those of Johannes Butzbach by some seventy-five years, and those of Thomas Platter by a full century.<sup>2</sup> As compared with the accounts of these later *scholares vagantes*, the significant portion of Burkhard Zink's autobiography, that concerned with his school-life, is somewhat brief; it comprises but five pages. A translation follows:<sup>3</sup>

"In God's name I am going to write the following book, relating how I, Burkhard Zingg, lived since childhood, and the adventures that befell me.

"My dear mother died in childbirth in the year of our Lord 1401; God have mercy on her, amen. I was then four years old,<sup>4</sup> and had two brothers, John and Conrad, and a sister, Margaret.<sup>5</sup> It should be mentioned that our father was called Burkhard Zingg. He was an industrious man who traded with Styria, and had property at Memingen near the grave of Mangold, next to Mrs. Beckin who was a widow but who later took another husband named Kipfenberg. A blacksmith has since bought our father's house, and to this day many smiths, who

<sup>1</sup> Chronik des Burkhard Zink, in Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte (Leipzig, 1866), V, 122-28; Oefelius, A. F. Rerum Boicarum Scriptores, etc. (2 vols. Augustae Vindelicorum, 1763), I, 247-49.

<sup>2</sup> Becker, D. J. Chronica eines fahrenden Schüler, oder Wanderbüchlein des Johannes Butzbach, aus der lateinischen Handschrift übersetzt (Regensburg, 1869).

Heman, J. K. R. Thomas und Felix Platter, zwei Lebensbilder aus der Zeit der Reformation und Renaissance, von ihnen selbst entworfen. Aus der Schweizerdeutschen . . . übertragen. Part II (Gütersloh, 1882); Monroe, Paul. Thomas Platter and the Educational Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century (New York, 1904).

<sup>3</sup> The original is in Middle High German.

<sup>4</sup> Chronik, 313: "als ich gehort han von meinem vater, so bin ich geporen worden in dem jar, als man zalt von Christi unseres lieben herrn gepurt 1396 jar, wie ich dann darvornen im buech nach lengs anzaigt han."

<sup>5</sup> "do was ich vier jar alt und hett drei geschwistergit, zwen brueder Johannes und Conraden, und Margreten unser schwester."

make scythes, live in that same street. I remember well that we lived there.

"In 1404 my father married again, a woman whose father was called Hans Schmid of Krumbach, a smith and an upright man. She was a proud, young woman, who did not like us children, but resented us and treated us badly; but she was very dear to our father, and pleased him well, as young wives often do please fat old men.

"In 1407, when I was a lad of eleven years, I left Memingen, my father and all my friends, and went away with a scholar.<sup>6</sup> I was also a scholar,<sup>7</sup> for I had gone to school four years. We went together in Krainland toward Wend, to a market-town called Reifnitz, which is a trading-center in Krainland, about six miles from Laibach toward Croatia. I remained in that country seven years, and went to school there, for my father had a brother who was a pastor in a village called Rieg.<sup>8</sup> Rieg is a

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Platter's experience with the "Bacchant, Paul" (Monroe translation, 94): "He promised that he would take me with him, and in Germany would place me in a school." Butzbach (*Chronica*, 14-15): "While this was happening to me, our neighbor's son, a great student, returned from a foreign school. He attached himself to my father, and requested that I be put to study with him. He promised that, with him, I would in a short time make greater progress in learning, elsewhere, than I would here in years."

<sup>7</sup> It is hardly probable that Zink became a "scholar" at eleven years of age. Technically speaking, he became a "shooter," i.e., a younger student who "fagged" for a scholar. Cf. Monroe, *op. cit.*, 34-37; and Schmidt, K. *Geschichte der Pädagogik* (4 vols. in 3. Cöthen, 1873-78), II, 316. Platter (Monroe translation, 95): "On the way I had to beg here and there for myself, and give also to my Bacchant, Paul." Butzbach (*Chronica*, 42-3): "When we reached a hamlet, he sent me into it to beg, and waited for me at the opposite end. If I came out with empty hands, he beat me severely, and cried: 'Well! by God, I'll teach you how to beg, and fight soon enough!' But if I got possession of anything good, he took it all, and I received at most only what he left. So things went throughout the entire time that I was with him. Yes, distrustful as he was, he often made me rinse out my mouth with warm water, and then spit it out, to see whether I had eaten anything good while begging." Platter (Monroe translation, 109): "Paul had taken another bacchant to live with him, called Achacius, from Mainz. I and my companion Hildebrand had to serve them both. But my companion ate almost all; then they went on the street after him, so that they might find him eating; or they commanded him to wash out his mouth with water, and to spit in a dish with water, so that they saw whether he had eaten anything."

<sup>8</sup> In an earlier section (*Chronik*, 104) Zink mentions the places he visited during this period of his wanderings. "Am ersten als ich von Memingen aus-

large, beautiful village, and five other villages belong to it, Göttenitz, Pausenbrunnen, etc. My master had been pastor of the same for thirty years, and had come there from Ortenburg with Count Friedrich's wife. She had made him priest, for he had been her secretary. She was a von Teck. The Dukes of Mindelheim, Duke Ulrich, Duke Friedrich, and Duke Lutz, who was afterwards Patriarch<sup>9</sup> in Friul for a number of years, were brothers of this same lady of Ortenburg. My master, my father's brother, sent me to board with an honest fellow called Hans Schwab, who was Count Friedrich's master-builder at Ortenburg, and who built at that time the lower house at Ortenburg at the foot of the mountain.

"When I had been with my master at Reifnitz seven years, he would indeed have brought me to honor, and would have done handsomely by me. He wished to send me to the University of Vienna, but I did not want that, and left him against his wishes, and so he gave me nothing. I was then a scholar of eighteen years, and went to Memingen and thought that I should now remain with my father, and be a young gentleman. But things had changed almost entirely, for my father and step-mother had separated, my brothers were dead, and my sister had married. And the inheritance I should have had from my mother had been given by my father and my other friends to my sister, for we children had our own property, and had separated from our father, with our maternal inheritance, when he married again. When I was with my master in Wend, my friends thought that I would never leave him, and that he would look out for me; and in order that they might make a better settlement upon my sister, they gave her more. And now that I had arrived, I desired money like other young fellows, but there was nothing for me, and no one was glad to see me; indeed, I was very sorry that I had not remained with my master, and got ready and went back into the country on the

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schied . . . kam ich gen Mindelheim, Landsperg, München, Wasserpurg . . . Reitwang . . . Wägingen, Saltzpurg, Gallein, Ratstat, über ein perg haist der Tauren Werffe, Mauterndorf, Gmünd, über den Kutzperg in das land ze Karnten, Friesack, Clagenfurt, sant Veit, Villach, da bin ich gewesen ain halb jar bei ainem burger, der hiess Truckenprot; Spitalin, Traburg, Lienz, ze Ortenpurg . . . über den Kranperg in Krainland, Radmasdorf, Krainpurg, Laibach . . . "

<sup>9</sup> "priarch."

instant. But when I arrived, I came like hail on a helmet.<sup>10</sup> My master was dead, and had given his property to his children and other people. He had four children. So I had returned in vain, and had wearied myself for nothing; there was not a heller's worth of property for me. It served me right, for had I remained with him, it would all have been mine.

"As I had tired myself out in vain, I got to my feet again, and returned to Memingen where the inn-keeper was at home. No one was pleased to see me; my friends paid no attention to me. Then I went to a kindly man who came from a village to the city. I conducted his two boys to school, remained with him a year and taught his boys.<sup>11</sup> In truth, I was in love with a little girl, and the longer I went to school the more unwillingly I did so, and finally I determined not to go to school at all, but wanted to learn a trade, for my sister's husband was an honest and rich weaver. Then I reflected upon the matter, and considered how his helper had a very good living, and that this trade would please me, and that I wanted to learn it. So I left school. My brother-in-law would have taught me gladly, but my other friends would not let me learn it, so I decided to learn another trade. Then, since I would not have anything else, my friends advised me to learn the furrier's trade, which was a good, honest trade. So I let myself be persuaded, and bound myself out to a furrier at Memingen, called master Jos, who has since been a watchman at the Kempten gate. When I had been with that master fourteen days, I had enough of him. It made my back ache, and I could not satisfy him at all. Then I went to my sister, and told her that I did not want to remain any longer with the furrier, but would go back to school. This pleased my sister and her husband also, for he would have liked to make a preacher of me.

"Then I prepared to leave, and took my school-books, and asked my sister and her husband for a little travelling-money. They gave me six shillings and no more. With that I set out the same day for Waldsee. I spent the night at the free lodging-house, for I had but little money. It should be mentioned that

<sup>10</sup> "da kam ich gleich als der schaur an die helm," i.e., in vain.

<sup>11</sup> Butzbach (*Chronica*, 55): "After that we set out again, and finally were accepted in the school at Eger, and there we both received employment with wealthy families, to assist the boys with their studies."

when I left the furrier, my friends had to give him seven pounds, which they had promised him for teaching me. After spending the night in the lodging-house at Waldsee, I arose early in the morning, and went across to Biberach. There I met an honest man (he was a very rich man, and had been a cobbler, but was not practicing his trade), who would, for God's sake, take care of me for a year or more, and I was to go to school, but I had to get my food for myself. I went to school fourteen days, but was ashamed to beg;<sup>12</sup> and when I left school, I bought a loaf of bread for one penny,<sup>13</sup> and cut bits from it; and when I came home and my master asked me whether I had been in the town for bread, I answered "yes." Then he said: "They give very willingly here to the poor scholars." This went on until I had not a penny left, but I would not beg. A scholar told me what a good school there was at Ehingen, and wanted me to go with him, so I did. I went with him to Ehingen, where there were many big bachants running all over the city in search of bread.<sup>14</sup> When I saw that the old and big scholars went about and sang for bread, I went with them and succeeded; with four others I begged enough for my needs, and was no longer ashamed of it, and obtained enough so that I ate well.<sup>15</sup>

"When I was at Ehingen, and had been in the school half a year, a big student came to me, and asked whether I would go with him to Ballingen where there was a very good school. He said he would help me get a good position there, and would aid me and advise me. He so carried me away with his pleasant speech, that I went with him to Ballingen which is a little town a mile from Hohenzollern. When we reached Ballingen, we remained there a year; I went to school, but my comrade deserted me, and gave me neither help nor advice. So I went to a

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* (*ibid.*, 42): "While we moved about in this manner, from place to place, I did not mind the fatigue of the journey as much as I did the begging for bread, which I hated from the bottom of my soul."

<sup>13</sup> "so kaufet ich ain laib prot umb 1 dn," i.e., 1 denier.

<sup>14</sup> Platter (Monroe translation, 102): "Once there were in the city (Breslau), so it was said, several thousand bacchants and shooters, who supported themselves wholly by alms."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* (*ibid.*, 100): "Those of us shooters who could sing went in the city to sing, but I went begging." *Ibid.* (*ibid.*, 110): "While there (Ulm) I often had the greatest hunger, and was fearfully, frost-bitten too, because I often went about in the dark till midnight to sing for bread."

poor man, a smith, named Spilbentz. I was with him for a time, and escorted his boy to school. After that I went to an inn-keeper who gave me all of my board, so that I did not need to beg. Later, I left this place, and went to Ulm, where I remained for a whole year with the city piper, one Hans von Biberach, who treated me well. I took his boy to school. He has since become a piper. I begged my bread.

"In 1415 I left Ulm, and returned to Memingen. My brother-in-law was delighted to see that I was somewhat chastened, and persuaded me to go to Augsburg. He wanted to have me consecrated an acolyte, but I remained for a short time only at Memingen. Later, I went to Augsburg in which city I entered the service of a rich, industrious shopkeeper, named Ulrich Schön, who some years previously had been ruined and reduced to poverty. I was with him a year, and left school entirely. Once, at a carnival, I rode down a boy near St. George's; and fearing the boy's friends, I left there and went to Nürnberg. With the shopkeeper I went to many fairs in Bavaria and elsewhere.

"And so I went to Nürnberg, where I remained three years with a respectable and wealthy man named Cuntz Beham, who was situated on the market-place, at the corner near the chapel of Our Blessed Lady of Salzburg, and sold iron. He had married the daughter of a worthy man named Schultheiss of Bernheim, who was situated right behind the monastery of the Friars Preachers, toward the hay-market. He was a rich man, and sold wine.

"After that I went to Bamberg, where I entered into an agreement with a man called John Frank, who was an attorney of canon law, and kept an inn also. I stayed with him half a year, and then went to Würzburg. At the time I was there, a quart of good wine cost a penny, or a heller, and they sold fourteen measures of wine for a Bohemian florin, as a matter of fact. It should be mentioned that on the day of my arrival at Würzburg, the Bishop of Würzburg, who had been away, returned. He had been to a large village to punish a nobleman named Seckendorf, who had plundered the town, and had burned down the church and tower into which the peasants had fled for refuge; some four hundred perished in the flames. So I

was told at the inn by two soldiers named Zwiffel and Leicht, who had been there when the deed was done.

"In 1419 I returned to Augsburg and entered the service of a rich and influential man named Jos Kramer. He was a master builder, yet he was a member of the weaver's gild. He did not practice his trade, however, for he had no need of it. He carried on trade in hides with Styria, and other business with Venice as well. He had probably 100 bales of barracan.<sup>16</sup> I had charge of all his trade with Venice, Frankfurt, and Nürnberg. He was indeed a fine man, and treated me well. God in heaven reward him, and preserve his soul."

Although it lacks the details supplied by Butzbach, and Platter, this brief account is worthy of a place in the literature of the wandering scholar. It is the first autobiography of its kind, of which the authorship is known. Furthermore, in its simple, naïve fashion, it compresses within small compass the tale that is told by Butzbach, and Platter. It indicates the essential features of that life: the wanderings from school to school, the hardships endured by the scholars, and the small amount of learning actually acquired by these vagabonds.<sup>17</sup>

There is nothing in the tales of Zink, Butzbach, and Platter that suggests the rollicking, carefree life of the *goliardi* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Although many of the same difficulties in obtaining food and shelter were experienced by the earlier wanderer—*Exul ego clericus, ad laborem natus*—<sup>18</sup> he seems also to have enjoyed a large measure of wine, women,

<sup>16</sup> "er hett wol 100 fardel barchat." Barchat=barracan (camel's-hair cloth), from the Persian *barak*.

<sup>17</sup> There is no explicit statement to that effect in this portion of Zink's narrative; it must be inferred from the character of his school-life. In a later section he admits that he had learned to write; "nun kan ich doch ain wenig schreiben." Zink was then twenty-four years old (Chronik, 129).

Butzbach (Chronica, 132): "On the entrance examination (at Deventer) I could answer nothing . . . I was assigned to the seventh grade to learn the elements of grammar with the little boys." At that time Butzbach was twenty.

Platter (Monroe translation, 117): "When I entered the school, I could do nothing; not even read Donatus. I was then eighteen years old."

<sup>18</sup> Carmina Burana, in *Bibliothek des literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart* (Stuttgart, 1847), XVI, 50:

Exul ego clericus  
ad laborem natus,  
tribulor multociens  
paupertati datus.



and song.<sup>19</sup> But these later-day members of the *familia Goliae* do not mention such happy moments, and in that sense they do not appear as true "sons of Golias." Indeed, it would be difficult to find a place for them among those earlier students who were classed with the *joculatores*, *bufones*, *histriones*, and other *ribaudi*, by the Church Councils of the thirteenth century.<sup>20</sup> The autobiographies mentioned indicate that in the *bacchantes* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a new type of wandering scholar had appeared to replace the *vagabundi*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:

Dum juvenus floruit,  
licuit et libuit  
facere quod placuit,  
iuxta voluntatem  
currere, peragere  
carnis voluptatem.

*Ibid.*, 233:

Bachi, qui est spiritus, infusio  
gentes allicit bibendi studio  
curarumque tedium  
solvit, et dat gaudium.

*Ibid.*, 235:

In taberna quando sumus,  
non curamus quid sit humus,  
sed ad ludum properamus,  
cui semper insudamus.

<sup>20</sup> In the twelfth century the wandering scholars enjoyed clerical privileges. Friedrich Barbarossa, in 1158, extended the *Privilegium scholarium* to those who journeyed from place to place in the pursuit of learning. By the opening of the thirteenth century, however, they had fallen into disrepute, because of their riotous mode of living. Many Council decrees rescinded their "ancient" privileges, and assigned them to a place between the laity and clergy. Furthermore, all classes were forbidden to receive and entertain members of the *secta vagorum scholarium*; and heavy fines were imposed upon those who violated this canon.

See the following Councils: Sens, 1223; Treves, 1227; Tours, and Chateau-Gonthier, 1231; Magdeburg, 1261; Mainz, 1261, 1310; Salzburg, 1274, 1292, 1310; St. Pölten, 1284; Würzburg, 1287; Cahors, Rhodéz, and Tulle, 1289; Bremen, 1292; Cologne, 1300. Bédier, J. Les Fabliaux, in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études* (Paris, 1893), XCVIII, 351; Ducange, C. Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis, IV, 85 (Art: *goliardus*); Faral, E. Les Jongleurs en France au Moyen Age, in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études* (Paris, 1910), CLXXXVII, 43; Hampe, T. Die fahrenden Leute in der deutschen Vergangenheit (Leipzig, 1902), 51; Hefele, K. J. Conciliengeschichte nach den Quellen, etc. (8 vols. Freiburg, 1873-90), V, 952, VI, 70-1, 79, 170, 230-1, 250, 264, 265; Hergenröther, J. A. C. Handbuch der allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte (2 vols. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1902-4), II, 709-10; Hubatsch, O. Die lateinische Vagantenlieder des Mittelalters (Görlitz, 1870), 14, 95.

whose mode of life is so clearly reflected in the *Carmina Burana*, and in a certain number of the *fabliaux*.<sup>21</sup>

ROBERT FRANCIS SEYBOLT

*University of Illinois*

<sup>21</sup> Bedier, *op. cit.*; *Carmina Burana*, *op. cit.*; Edéstan du Méril. *Poésies populaires latines du moyen age* (Paris, 1847); Faral, *op. cit.*, 32-43, 263-67; Gabrielli, A. *Su la poesia dei goliardi* (Città di Castello, Lapi, 1889); Hubatsch, *op. cit.* Langlois, C. V. *La littérature goliardique*, in *Revue polilique et litteraire* (1892), II, 807-13; and (1893), I, 174-80; Pernwerth von Bärnstein, A. *Ubi sunt, qui ante nos in mundi fuere?* (Würzburg, 1881); Symonds, J. A. *Wine, Women and Song* (London, 1899); Wright, T. *Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes* (London, 1841).